

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. GRAYSON, I assure you, you will have ample time.

I want to conclude with this: I believe that this is a great country. Notwithstanding all that I have explained about Black history, this is a great country, and I love my country. I believe that this is a country that has allowed me privileges and opportunities that I probably could not have enjoyed in another place. So let me share this brief vignette with you.

I was not born into riches, obviously, based upon the stories that I have told, but from very poor parents. My father could neither read nor write.

I remember going to work with my father one day. I have no idea as to why I was there. My father was a mechanic's helper. He was not a mechanic. He was a helper. He was the person who would clean up the wet spot on the floor. He was the person who would fetch the tools and do the things that were required that many people would not do. And I heard them address my father by a name that I was not familiar with. They called him "Secretary." And as any child would, I suppose, I made an inquiry: Why do they call you Secretary? He explained to me that they were making fun of him, that they were aware that he could not read and that he could not write, and they were making fun of him.

I said: Well, why would you do this? Why would you let them make fun of you like this? Why would you let them do this to you?

It hurt as a young child to see your father being made fun of because he could not read and he could not write.

By the way, it was not his choice. It wasn't his choice to be a person who could not read or write.

But my father's answer is really what this story is all about. When I said to him: Why would you let them do this to you? He said to me, after having told me many more things, but he said to me: I do it, and I accept it because I want you to be able to read and write.

And isn't it wonderful that the son of a secretary can now stand in the well of the House of Representatives in the United States of America and read and write laws for the United States of America?

I thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to all who made it possible for us to have this hour. And I believe that ours is the best country in the world. I believe that it really doesn't get much better than the United States of America. There are things that we need to do and things that we need to correct. But on a bad day, it is good to live in the USA. On a bad day, when your dog that you reared from a pup wants to bite you, on a bad day when your spouse wants to desert you, if you have to have your dog bite you and your spouse desert you, have it happen in the United States of America.

God bless you, and I yield to Mr. GRAYSON.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, today is a sad anniversary. Twenty years ago today, the brilliant comedian, Bill Hicks, died of cancer at the age of 32. Hicks' comedy has been an inspiration to me and millions of others. He has been voted the fourth greatest stand-up comedian of all time. And if Hicks were alive to hear that, he would complain bitterly about losing out to Gandhi, Einstein, and Stalin.

In honor of Bill Hicks, I would like to try to yield this platform to him. This is how Bill Hicks ended his own performances. He would say to the audience:

You have been fantastic. I hope you have enjoyed the show. There is a point to my act. Is there a point to my act? Let's find a point. I would say the point of my act—and I have to—but the point is this:

The world is a ride like an amusement park. And when you choose to go on it, you think it is real because that is how powerful our minds are. And the ride goes up and down, and it goes round and round. It has thrills and chills, and it is very brightly colored, and it is very loud and it is fun. For a while.

Some people have been on the ride for a long time, and they begin to question: "Is it real or is it a ride?" And other people, they have remembered, and they come back to us, and they say: "Hey, don't worry. Don't be afraid, ever. Because it is just a ride." And we kill those people. We kill those people.

We tell them: "Shut him up. We have a lot invested in this ride. Shut him up. Look at the furrows of worry. Look at my big bank account and my family. This has to be real."

This can't be just be a ride. But it is just a ride. And we always kill those good guys who try to tell us that it is just a ride. Have you ever noticed that? And we let the demons run amok.

But it doesn't matter because it is just a ride, and we can change it any time we want. It is only a choice. No effort. No worry. No job. No savings and money. It is just a ride.

It is a choice, right now, between fear and love. The eyes of fear want you to put bigger locks on your doors and buy guns and close yourself off. The eyes of love instead see all of us as one.

Here is what we can do to change the world right now into a better ride. Take all the money that we spend on weapons and defense each year and, instead, spend it on feeding, clothing, and educating the poor of this world which we could do many times over—not just one human being, but all of us, no one excluded. And then we can explore space together, both inner and outer, forever in peace.

Thank you very much. You have been great. I hope you enjoyed it. You are fantastic. Thank you very much.

Bill Hicks wrote his own eulogy, and that was how he ended his act. This is what he said in his own final words in his own eulogy:

I left here in love, in laughter, and in truth. And wherever truth, love, and laughter abide, I am there in spirit.

Rest in peace, Bill Hicks.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I yield back.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WESTMORELAND (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today after 2:30 p.m. on account of attending a visitation for a funeral.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 26, 2014, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4812. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Keith B. Alexander, United States Army, and his advancement on the retired list in the grade of general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4813. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General William N. Phillips, United States Army, and his advancement on the retired list in the grade of lieutenant general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4814. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on assistance provided for sporting events during calendar year 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4815. A letter from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Kenya Airways of Nairobi, Kenya; to the Committee on Financial Services.

4816. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled, "The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Mandated Evaluation of Express Lane Eligibility: Final Findings"; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4817. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Acetochlor; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0829; FRL-9904-19] received January 22, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4818. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; Attainment Plan for the Philadelphia-Wilmington, Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Delaware Nonattainment Area for the 1997 Annual Fine Particulate Matter Standard; Correction [EPA-R03-OAR-2010-0141; 9905-88-Region 3] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4819. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Texas; Approval of Texas Motor Vehicle Rule Revisions [EPA-R06-OAR-2006-0885; FRL-9906-03-Region 6] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.